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## Two Georgia Patriots: Abraham Baldwin and James Jackson

### ABRAHAM BALDWIN

*From the National Intelligencer*

**Mr. Baldwin**

Our last number announced the death of Abraham Baldwin, Senator from Georgia. The annals of our country have rarely been adorned with a character more venerable or a life more useful than his. War brings its animation, and creates its own heroes; it often rears them up to fame with as little assistance from native genius as from study, or from moral and political virtue.

It is in times of peace that an illustrious name is hardest earned, and most difficult to be secured, especially among enlightened republicans, when an equality of rank and right leaves nothing to the caprice of chance; where every action is weighed in its proper balance, and every man compared not only with his neighbor but with himself; his motives being tested by the uniformity of his measures.

Mr. Baldwin was born in Connecticut in November, 1754, and received his education very early at the University at New Haven. He was one of the best classical and mathematical scholars of the age in which he has lived. He was employed as one of the professors in this college during the greater part of the American war, at the close of which he began the practice of law, and went to establish himself in the State of Georgia. He arrived at Savannah in the beginning of 1784; he was immediately admitted a counsellor at the Georgia bar, and in three months afterwards he was elected as member of the State Legislature. During the first session of that body after his election he performed a service for the people of the State, for which their posterity will bless his memory. Indeed, if he had done nothing

for them since, this action alone would have immortalized him there. He originated the plan of the University of Georgia, drew up the charter and with infinite labor and patience, in vanquishing all sorts of prejudices and removing every obstruction, he persuaded the Assembly to adopt it. This instrument endowed the University with forty thousand acres of excellent land, required it to establish one central seat for the higher branches of education, and a secondary college in every county in the State; all dependent on the principal seminary.

These lands were the uncultivated; the State itself was new. It is only within the last six years that the rents of the University lands have enabled the trustees to erect the buildings and organize the institution; and it is already in a flourishing condition. Its principal seat is at Athens, on the Oconee river. It is now under the direction of Josiah Meigs, its first President; a man equally eminent for mathematical and chemical science, and legal and classical erudition.

John Milledge, late Governor of the State, and now Senator in Congress, early associated his labors with those of his friend Baldwin in bringing forward this establishment, and we understand that the present trustees have erected, within the walls of the first college, a marble monument to Baldwin, as founder of the institution, and to Milledge, his associate.

This is not the only instance in which we find their names connected by monumental acts of public authority. Milledgeville is the shire town of Baldwin county, and is now declared the seat of State government.

Mr. Baldwin had not been two years in Georgia when he was elected member of Congress. This was in 1785, to take his seat in 1786. From that time till the day of his death he was, without a moment's intermission, a member of Congress from that State, either as delegate under the old Constitution, until the year 1789, representative under the new until the year 1799, and Senator from that time till his death. And the term for which he was last elected had still four years to run from the 4th of March, 1807, the day of his decease.

There has probably been no other instance of such a long and uninterrupted series of confidence and service among the members of the American Congress. And, what is more remarkable, on the first day that he was confined to his house, in his last illness, he told his friends that during his twenty-two years of public service, that day, according to his best recollection, was the first that he had been absent from his public duties.

Mr. Baldwin was a member of the Convention that framed the present Constitution of the United States. This he always considered as the greatest service that he ever performed for his country, and his estimate is doubtless just. He was an active member of that most illustrious and meritorious body. Their deliberations were in secret; but we have good authority for saying that some of the essential clauses of the invaluable, and we hope everlasting compact, which they presented to their country, owe their origin and insertion to Abraham Baldwin.

His manner of conducting business is too well known to his fellow laborers, and to the great mass of his contemporaries, to require any illustration in this hasty biographical sketch. He may have wanted ambition to make himself brilliant, but he never wanted industry to render himself useful. His oratory was simple, forcible, convincing. His maxim of never asserting anything but what he believed to be true could not fail to be useful in carrying conviction to others. Patient of contradiction, and intolerant to the wildest opinions, he could be as indulgent to the errors of judgment in other men as if he had stood the most in need of such indulgence for himself.

During the violent agitation of parties which have disturbed the repose of public men in this country for the last ten years, he has always been moderate, but firm; relaxing nothing in his republican principles, but retaining all possible charity for his former friends who may have abandoned theirs. He has lived without reproach, and has probably died without an enemy.

The state of society would be rendered much better than it is if the private lives of virtuous men could be as well known as their public lives, that they might be kept clearly in view as

objects of imitation. We are creatures of habit, and our habits are formed as much by repeating after others as after ourselves. Men, therefore, mistake a plain moral principle when they suppose it meritorious to conceal their good actions from the eye of the world. On the contrary, it is a part of their duty to let such actions be known, that they may extend their benefits for a sort of reproduction, and be multiplied by imitation.

Mr. Baldwin's private life was full of beneficent and charitable deeds which he was too studious to conceal from public notice. Having never been married, he had no family of his own, and his constant habits of economy and temperance left him the means of assisting many young men in their education and their establishment in business. It would, perhaps, be improper for us to mention particular cases beyond his father's family, but in that there was an ample field for his benevolence. Six orphans, his half brothers and sisters, were left to his care, by their father's death, in the year 1787, and the estate that was to support them proved insolvent. He paid the debts of the estate, quit-claimed his porportion to these children, and educated all, in a great measure, at his own expense. The five, out of the six, who are still living are well established in life, and owe everything to his paternal affection.

His last illness was so short, and his death so unexpected, that none of his relatives, except his brother-in-law, were able to be present at his funeral. But it seemed as if the public in general were his near relatives.

We have rarely witnessed more general and genuine marks of respect at the loss of any of the great benefactors of our country, particularly among the members from Georgia. In that State his loss will be most deeply felt, though it must be very sensibly perceived in the councils of the nation.

Though his funeral was two days after Congress dissolved, many members stayed expressly to attend it. The procession was five miles, from Capitol-Hill to Rock-Creek Church, formed by the Vice-President of the United States, a number of the Senators and Representatives and the heads of departments. Chief mourners, Joel Barlow, brother-in-law of the deceased;

Governor Milledge, his colleague of the Senate, and Mr. Early, Representative from Georgia. His remains were deposited by the side of his old friend, Gen. Jackson, his colleague, whom he had followed to the grave just one year before. The two chaplains of Congress attended, and the funeral service was performed by Mr. Sayre.

A reprint from the *Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger*, Saturday, March 28th, 1807.

## JAMES JACKSON

From the *Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser*,  
Wednesday, April 9, 1806.

### COMMUNICATION.

Died, at the City of Washington, on the 19th of March last, in the 59th year of his age, the Honorable James Jackson, a Senator from this State in the Senate of the United States, and Major General of the First Division of the Militia of Georgia.

On this event, a message from the Senate to the House of Representatives announced the death of this highly esteemed citizen. A committee of arrangements was formed for his interment, which took place with all the ceremonials and respect due to the rank and character of the deceased; both Houses having unanimously agreed in the words of the resolution of the House of Representatives, to wear mourning for one month "in testimony of their respect for the memory of that distinguished patriot."

This expression of the will of the National Representatives is at once an eulogy on the occasion; and evidence of the high opinion entertained of the virtues and talents of the deceased. What more can be said than to reiterate "that a distinguished patriot is no more."

Some few biographical sketches may be satisfactory. General Jackson was a native of Devonshire in England, and came over to this State at an early period of his life. Following the bent of his genius, he engaged immediately in the study of law, in the pursuit of which he continued until the year 1775, when the seeds of the American Revolution in this State first burst forth. Among the foremost of our young citizens who stepped forward in support of the American cause, we find *him* a private in the Volunteer Light Infantry Company of Savannah, opposing in that early stage the invaders in 1776 of the rights of his adopted country. Having acquired by his decision and

courage the confidence of his associates, his promotion to the command of the company soon followed, together with an appointment to an office in civil affairs of the State. These marks of the confidence of his country, added to the natural ardency of his temper, made him press forward with incessant and persevering exertion, in defense of the State, during the most gloomy period of American affairs, and we trace him in various and repeated conflicts with the enemy, both in this State and in South Carolina, particularly in the defeat of Col. Campbell on Ogeechee, and on many other occasions whilst he commanded the State Legion in this State and in the battles of Blackstocks and the Cowpens, in South Carolina, where he acted as Brigade Major, and where the American arms were crowned with brilliant success.

To rescue his country from the possession of the enemy, by whom it was at that period almost totally overrun, he was appointed by the Legislature, then convened at Augusta, to the command of a legion of horse and infantry, denominated the Georgia Legion, and which he organized with promptitude. In this duty of enterprise and exposure he is deservedly estimated as an officer of courage and merit, and in the vigilant discharge of which he continued until the evacuation of Savannah, in 1782. A general peace soon following, he devoted himself to his profession, in which he was successful, able and upright. On the organization of the State Militia, he was appointed to the command of the Chatham Regiment, afterwards a Brigadier of the State, and ultimately the Major General of the First Division.

Equally zealous for political as for civil rights, he was repeatedly elected a representative in the State and National Legislatures, and called to the Senate of the Union, in all which capacities he was uniformly active and zealous in support of the rights of the people. A period arriving when his services were required at home, he resigned his seat in the Senate, and upon an urgent and important occasion appeared again with uncommon applause in the State Legislature and convention—the intrepid assertor of measures that tended to restore those rights



which the corruption and venality of the times had wantonly trampled upon. Having with the support and assistance of his equally independent friends succeeded in the suppression of the most injurious proceedings, he was elected to fill the executive chair of the State, the important duties of which, as Governor and Commander-in-Chief, he discharged with firmness, integrity and general satisfaction. A vacancy happening in the Senate of the United States, General Jackson was a second time called to that dignified station, in which office, and at his post, he died. True to his principles, he was in every station a zealous advocate of pure representative government; viewing with a jealous and vigilant eye the rights of elections, and detesting those baneful speculations, on public property, so destructive to the rights and morals of the people. He was warm in his friendships, affectionate in his family, and industrious in all his pursuits. Scrupulously exact in the discharge of his public functions, every private consideration was waived when in competition with what he deemed his duty; holding it sacred that where he promised he ought to perform. From this long train of services, then, from the general confidence placed in him; the uniform integrity and ability which characterized his career, we cannot but deplore the "death of this distinguished patriot."

An affectionate wife, with four sons, brothers and relatives by whom the General was greatly beloved, will sensibly feel his loss.